1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.

[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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for example, the Gana-Gana (Dibo) sub-tribe of the Nupe is classed sometimes under 'Nupe' and sometimes as a separate group. In the Census of 1921 their number is given as 19,700, in the Census of 1931 as 2,897;[1] into which tribal category the rest of them disappeared I have been unable to discover. A last example: only in 1936 did the Administration of Ibadan Division discover that the people who were listed in their statistics under the heading 'Tapa' (Takpa) were identical with the 'Nupe' of the Northern Provinces, Takpa being the Yoruba name for Nupe.

The difficulties and sources of error which render tribal statistics so uncertain do not affect in the same degree population statistics compiled for certain single Provinces, political Divisions, and especially townships. Here the improvement in registration has had its full effect; and I may add that in the preceding discussion I have used only these more reliable statistics. Here are certain figures illustrating population movement in Niger and Ilorin Provinces—the two Provinces in which the bulk of the Nupe people are living.

TABLE VII

	General Census 1921	*General Census 1931*	*Local Census 1934*
Bida Emirate . . .	171,958	171,458	168,247
Bida town . . .	29,848	25,231	23,286
Nupe in Ilorin Province .	64,652	65,040	53,600
Nupe in Niger Province .	233,840	226,132	..

Again we find a marked decrease in population and a decrease which cannot be dismissed as due to miscalculation. Evidently, a decrease in population even considerably smaller than that shown in these figures cannot be due merely to unfavourable birth- and death-rate. Emigration seems the only alternative, and I have indeed found evidence of this. A continuous emigration on a small scale and the existence of a floating population of traders and craftsmen drifting to the prosperous centres in the south could be established beyond doubt.[2] The study of life-histories and genealogies among the Nupe shows further that emigration of considerable importance occurred, roughly, in the last six to ten years. The drift of the emigration was again mostly south, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, that is, to the wealthier and, above all, less heavily taxed districts of Southern Nigeria.[3] In-

direction of an anthropologist, Dr. C. K. Meek, is in many respects more correct than the more comprehensive and elaborate recent Census.

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, p. 70; on p. 30, however, there are, again, 18,220 Gana-Gana.

[2] A census of Nupe people living at present in Lokoja, for example, showed the following distribution of professions among 60 family heads: 2 farmers, 4 mechanics, 5 barbers, 15 tailors and embroiderers, 4 black- and brass-smiths, 9 Koran teachers, 3 mat-makers, 2 carpenters, 5 canoemen, 5 N.A. messengers, interpreters, and other small officials.

[3] These are the comparative tax figures for 1934–5 per adult for Bida Emirate and Ilorin and Ibadan respectively: Bida town, 9*s.*–10*s.* 6*d.*; Bida Emirate,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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vestigations among the Nupe community of Ilorin and Ibadan have elicited the information that in 1934–5 a big wave of Nupe emigration had reached these towns.[1] These two years, my informants explained, had been bad years, with a severe food scarcity in the north, high prices, and shortage of money. The reason is indeed convincing: 1933–4 marked the nadir of the economic depression in Northern Nigeria, which almost paralysed trade and native industry. To the mobile professions of trader and craftsman emigration appeared in many cases as the natural solution.

Density of Population

The following table illustrates the density of population in different parts of Nupe country. The first three figures are taken from the Census of 1931, the other figures, referring to districts of Bida Division, are compiled from the local Census of 1934.

TABLE VIII

Locality	*Density per sq. mile*	*Locality*	*Density per sq. mile*
Bida Division . .	35·22	Mokwa district . .	12
Agaie-Lapai Division .	21·70	Kutigi ,, . .	13
Lafiagi-Patigi Division .	30·00	Districts west of Kaduna river ('Trans-Kaduna')	17·6
Badeggi district . .	22	Districts east of Kaduna river ('Cis-Kaduna') .	55
Gbangba ,, . .	50		
Jima-Doko ,, . .	53		
Kacha ,, . .	60		

The striking difference in density of population east and west of the Kaduna river needs explanation. It lies in the historical fact of the Fulani conquest of Nupe and the immigration of the Fulani rulers and their huge army of warriors, slaves, courtiers, and other dependants into the area east of the Kaduna, where they settled, occupied the land, and built their capital and numerous villages. The history of the conquest and the political reorganization of the country which it entailed will be described later in more detail. But here already we realize the far-reaching influence which this difference in population density must have upon the social organization of the country, and upon the distribution of natural resources on which its economic life depends.

districts, 9*s.* 6*d.*–15*s.*; Ilorin town, 9*s.*; Ilorin Emirate, districts, 10*s.*–11*s.*; Ibadan town, 7*s.*

[1] During 1935 200 people from Bida Emirate migrated south. (Personal information received from the District Officer, Bida Division.)

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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such facts of common life which would link the whole tribe we find only one—a weak, potential link, determining individual action only, namely, the rule of hospitality which every Nupe must extend to his fellow tribesmen (but which he would not refuse to strangers).[1] Otherwise the common life that exists in Nupe takes its course in a very much more narrow compass, in scattered villages, towns, or groups of villages—small circles on the spacious tribal map.

Politically the Nupe people are scattered over several 'countries', seven Emirates and chieftainships to-day, and four or five in pre-European times. Even the ancient Nupe kingdom has not, as far as our evidence goes, included the whole group; sections of Nupe have always lived outside its boundaries, and other tribes or tribal sections beside the Nupe have formed the nationals of these countries of Nupe. To-day the largest of them is Bida Emirate with a population of 171,458, the core of the ancient kingdom of Nupe whose present rulers still take the title *Etsu Nupe*, King of Nupe. Some of the other, smaller Nupe states are ruled by independent kings (in modern terminology, Emirs): Patigi and Lafiagi, comprising an area of 3,023 square miles and a population of 90,702, and Agaie and Lapai, with an area of 2,587 square miles, and populations of 24,174 and 25,000, respectively. Other Nupe territories are but small chieftainships, political districts, under the rulership of Hausa, Yoruba, or Gbira kings: Zuguma (with a population of 5,000) under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora, Shonga and Shari (appr. 17,000) under the Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin, and Eggã and its hinterland (5,000) under the *Atta* of Gbira. In Bida, Patigi, Lafiagi, and Agaie the Nupe represent the vast majority of the population; in Kontagora, Lapai, Ilorin, and Gbira they are a small minority, living side by side with Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Kakanda, and Gbira.

If the Nupe tribe is thus not a local group in the strict sense of the word, it is not a linguistic unit either. Nupe is spoken to-day by the bilingual Gbari of Paiko and Lapai and the Kakanda on the Niger. On the other hand, some of the split-off sections and colonies of Nupe, though still laying claim to tribal membership, have abandoned and forgotten their mother tongue. True, these facts reflect only comparatively recent historical changes. But language as such, in its very structure and organization, proves the same divergence between the two social realities, tribe and linguistic group. Nupe language belongs to the group of Sudanese languages, and within this category forms, together with Ibo, Edo, Ijo, Andoni, and Yoruba, the '*Kwa*-group' of West African languages.[2] Nupe is related more closely, in structure and vocabulary, to Gbari and Kakanda (I am speaking here only of languages which I have studied myself). But to speak of Nupe language pure and simple is incorrect. There exist to-day five markedly different dialects: a dialect which we will term Nupe proper, and the dialects of Ebe, Žitako, Bassa,

[1] There exists a fine distinction, though: fellow-tribesmen who claim hospitality are, where possible, given a sleeping hut to spend the night in, and are often invited to share a meal with their hosts; strangers sleep in the entrance hut of the compound.

[2] See D. Westermann, *Africa*, viii, p. 145, 1935.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

619 on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved
634 over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

[567] *Konú* (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which
[114] are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Bafa* in the 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but, probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

Demographic Data

●161 *Population Estimates*

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

162 1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda ..	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge ..	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op. cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 107.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 393–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

in part from erroneous naming of some tribes and sub-tribes as Nupe and the omission of others.[27] Marked decreases in the population are probably due to continuous small scale emigration, especially since 1930. This has been mostly in a southerly direction, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, i.e., to the wealthy and less heavily taxed districts of the south. In one or two cases, people of one sub-tribe have migrated into the district of another. Other significant reasons for the decrease in population may be venereal disease, abortion, and contraception, and the high infant mortality rate, though abortion is said to be practised only in the larger towns and before marriage. Infant mortality is probably the greatest single cause of the decline; many infants die of malaria.[28]

No detailed analysis has yet been made of the 1952 Census figures which, for the Northern Provinces, show an increase of about 23,000 on those of 1931.

Density of Population

The following estimates are available:

Division or District	*Persons per square mile*	*Date*
Bida	35·22	1931 Census
Agaie-Lapai	21·7	" "
Lafiagi-Pategi	30	" "
Badeggi	22	1934 (local census)
Gbangba	50	" " "
Jima-Doko	53	" " "
Kacha	60	" " "
Mokwa	12	" " "
Kutigi	13	" " "
"Trans-Kaduna" (districts west of Kaduna river)	17·6	" " "
"Cis-Kaduna" (districts east of Kaduna river)	55	" " "

The difference in density east and west of the Kaduna River may be explained by the Fulani conquest of the Nupe and the consequent emigration of the Fulani rulers and their dependents into the area east of the Kaduna.[29]

[27] Nadel (1942, pp. 9–10) gives as examples the Ganagana (Dibo) who were sometimes classed as a separate group, and the "Tapa" (Takpa) who were listed separately in the Southern Provinces until it was discovered in 1936 that Takpa was the Yoruba name for Nupe.

[28] See Brooke, *Census of Nigeria* (1931) Vol. II, p. 29; Nadel, 1942, pp. 6–8; Weatherhead, M.S.

[29] Nadel, op. cit., p. 11.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
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dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neighbouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.